

Bldg. 10/Room 9N-119

May 21, 1971

Professor Debi Burma
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Varanasi-5, INDIA

Dear Debi:

I certainly understand the difficulties you face in making the trip to the States as planned. I am still hopeful that things will work so that you can come on schedule. We are all looking forward to seeing you and having a chance to discuss the year's work in detail.

After receiving your letter I discussed the situation with Dr. Morris Jones, at the Fogarty International Office of the NIH. He is the man who oversees our PL-480 grant. He understands the extra complication in the situation resulting from the fact that I leave on the 31st of July for a year's sabbatical abroad. He also indicated to me that he would have no objection if we held our discussions in Israel, should you not be able to get to the States before I go to Israel for the sabbatical. You could then come at your convenience to Rehovoth. The travel funds in our PL-480 grant would, of course, be enough to cover the travel. Dr. Jones and I also discussed the possibility that, at some convenient date you come and talk with me in Israel and then continue on to the United States as originally planned. Randy Holmes will be in the lab, and he is the one who has been working on RNase V and RNase II. He could then serve as your host to some extent, and would certainly be able to go over new equipment and new methods with you.

Should you consider the trip to the United States in my absence I will have to go back to the officials of the Institute in which I work, and see if we can still get the money we had arranged to cover your stay here. I tried to find this out this week, but Dr. Rall, Director of Research was unavailable. Rather than put off answering your urgent letter I am writing now without all the information. As soon as I know, I will write again.

At Doctor Jones' suggestion I am sending copies of this letter to him, and to Dr. Randall Thompson at the American Embassy in New Delhi.

It was very exciting to read that both the Scintillation counter and the gas flow counting system have arrived and are working satisfactorily. Your equipment situation has obviously improved steadily over the past year and I know that life must be a good deal simpler for you. Also, good news on the RNase III. The polymers you need will be coming soon. Your remark about what the Delhi heat would do to poly I poly C reminded me of what the Banaras heat did for me. I am also reminded every time I take a drink of carbonated water. It was six months after that trip before I could stand a sip of the

stuff, I drank so much in Banares.

We have something exciting going, Randy Holmes and I. But it is not to be discussed except for you and Maharani since it is still just beginning and we think several others have come quite close to finding it for themselves. As a result of some of the crazy experiments we did in trying to track down RNase V, we have discovered an inhibitor of RNase II. It could still turn out to be trivial, but using the heated extracts one makes to look for RNase V, we discovered a heat stable factor that inhibits RNase II and requires ATP to be active. We are currently purifying the factor from heated S-100 and the purification so far is going well. From the fractionation it would well be a protein, but of course, we aren't sure yet. We have no idea how it works, and are trying hard not to make the mistake of doing a lot of experiments quickly before purifying. In a case like this, purification is always the thing to do first. David Apirion has some hyperactive RNase II mutants, and we are getting one to test for the possibility that the reason for the hyperactivity is the absence of the inhibitor. As far as I know this is the first 'interesting' inhibitor of RNase in bacteria.

One other question with regard to long term plans. When does Koteswar finish with you, and is there any chance of his getting support for some training in the United States? Please don't mention this to him as yet, since I have no assurance of what the situation will be when I return from Israel, but at this point it is worth thinking about. Also, I would appreciate some candid remarks from you on his ability. My own impression is an excellent one, but you of course, know more than I do.

With very best regards.

Sincerely yours,

Maxine Singer

MS:vt